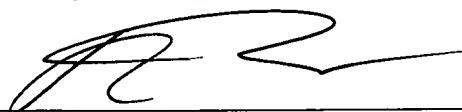


Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by this Preliminary Amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made.**"

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES

Claims 1-9 have been amended as follows:

1. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for selectively increasing the production of propionate in the gastrointestinal tract of a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.
2. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for decreasing blood cholesterol levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.
3. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for decreasing blood triglyceride levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.
4. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for decreasing very low density lipoprotein levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.
5. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for increasing high density lipoprotein levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.
6. (Once Amended) A method [The use of dextran in the preparation of a nutritional composition] for increasing insulin sensitivity in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

7. (Once Amended) The method [use] according to [any of claims] Claim 1 [to 6 in which] wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

8. (Once Amended) The method [use] according to [any of claims] Claim 1 [to 7 in which] wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and [or] mixtures thereof.

9. (Once Amended) The method [use] according to [any of claims] Claim 1 [to 8 in which] wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claims 10-24 have been added.